Why A Rich Girl and a Poor Man Can Never Be Happy Together

Julia Tuck French, Who Gave Up Wealth and Social Position for a Chaffeur Husband, Confesses That the "Love-in-a-Cottage" Idea Is Impossible

"Jack" Geraghty.

JULIA FRENCH GERAGHTY has left her husband, and taking her little six-year-old son with her has gone back to the stately, luxurious Newport home, from which she eloped with Geraghty, then one of her father's chauffeurs, nearly eight years ago. Action for legal separation has been begun, but it is doubtful whether any divorce proceedings will ever be brought. There are, it would seem, no legal grounds to warrant them.

And the grounds for separation? Simply these—that after more than seven years of trial young Mrs. Geraghty is convinced that a girl who has once been very rich and a man who has always been poor cannot be happy together; that the poetic idea symbolized by the phrase "Love in a cottage" is purely poetry, and, therefore, not fit for harsh contact with a practical world; and that the theory of "All for love and the world well lost" is only workable when the world is actually lost, and not always just around the corner to remind you of the many comforts that you have been used to and are now doing without.

Mrs. Geraghty was born Julia Estelle Tuck French. Her father, Amos Tuck French, is one of the richest men in America, her family one of the highest placed socially. Up to the time of her elopement she had few wishes that money could fulfil left ungranted. She had a luxurious home and a retinue of servants to wait upon her, hand and foot, as the saying goes.

"Jack" Geraghty worked for a living. His father is a cabman on Newport's streets. His mother was often hard put to it to make both ends meet. They had no social pretensions whatever. They lived in a little one-story frame house in Newport's humblest section, and everybody waited upon themselves.

Romantic young Mrs. Geraghty thought that love could build a shining, immortal bridge between the French "cottage" on the Heights and the one-story house on humble Prospect Hill street, and for all each represented. She found it couldn't.

Novelists build beautiful structures about King Cophetuas and beggar maids and princesses, who gaily leave their golden palaces to trudge the world with penniless sons of toil, and gravely assert that always they "live happy forever after." But unromantic students of human psychology and social reactions take issue with the fictionists. They say that after some overpowering strong new emotion has pushed into the background habits and modes of thought built up in a person from childhood, those old habits push forward inevitably as the new emotion grows more familiar, until at last they rule once more, and that which for a time pre-empted their place must sit at the foot of the mind's throne instead of upon it.

Thus King Cophetua, still loving his beggar maid, would, after the honeymoon, be increasingly annoyed at her lapses from the standard of manners and thought of those which he was accustomed to associate with ladies. She, in her turn, would be profoundly bored and distressed by having to try to adjust her early training to his.

And the impetuous princesses would long for feather beds instead of leafy bowers, and the duties of her old servitors would seem like acts of ministering angels while she was laboring over a hot cookstove or washing out her lord and master's dirty clothes.

The Jesuits say: "Let us have a child until he is twelve years old and the world cannot seriously harm him." These wise brothers know from centuries of long observation and experience that the habits of thought and conduct formed during those plastic years of childhood will hold throughout life, no matter how the environment may change.

Julia French was seventeen when her love for her father's chauffeur swept her away from her moorings. Mrs. Julia Geraghty, twenty-four years old and back in her parental home, sees very clearly what has happened to her, and is not afraid to discuss it.

"Love, such love as Jack and I had for each other," she tells her friends, "is not the best basis for a happy marriage. I have learned, through hard and bitter experience that an interest in the same pursuits, the being born to the same class, to the same standards of living and thinking and even eating make the only basis for a continued happiness.

"When I fell madly in love with Jack, the fact that he served my family and had served others, while I was, myself, brought up to be served, did not have any meaning for me. Jack was handsome and had what I thought was a picturesque way of speaking, and, of course, I thought myself undyingly in love with him. His clothes and some of his habits were different from those of our men, but I thought these were but surface matters and could be quickly changed. And I was willing to face anything with him because of my love. But it wasn't long before I realized how hard it would be for me to find full happiness in the new conditions."

Nevertheless, no hint did she give to the family that had practically disinherited her of her perplexities and woe. When the baby came there was a softening of her parents' attitude—but, alas! while this brought her closer to the old life for which every habit-trained nerve was craving, still, Tantalus-like, it was just beyond her reach.

When she eloped with "Handsome Jack" Geraghty she knew, of course, that he was poor. But weren't there poor men in her own class, men who were perfectly acceptable to her people, whom she might even marry if she chose. And here, she says, she made her first error—for what she did not realize was that these were all men whose traditions and background were the same as her own; men who knew how to accept the services of a valet or other personal servants; who knew all the ins and outs of society, even if they could not afford to run with the crowd. In short, even though poor in pocket, these men spoke the same language as Julia French's father, uncles, brothers and cousins.

From her girlish viewpoint Geraghty was classed with these men. His only drawback as a husband, therefore, was his lack of fortune. Well, never mind, they would get married, and father, Uncle Stuyvesant Le Roy and Aunt Elsie Vanderbilt would speedily make them rich! And even if they didn't get a great fortune, why, they loved each other and would be happy ever after!

Thus reasoned Julia French in her father's big country place in Tuxedo, or in the handsome home in Newport. Moving about happily in her own suite of rooms, with chintz-hung sitting room, daintily furnished bedroom, and a bath and dressing room all done in white enamel and silver, the petted daughter of fortune saw no dangers in a future where her suite of rooms would give place to half of one little bedroom in an already crowded cottage on a narrow side street, and where she would be forced to share the family bathroom!

To let such small things influence her would be treason to the man she loved! What mattered it if she would have to keep house for Jack and wait on him? Were they not in love?

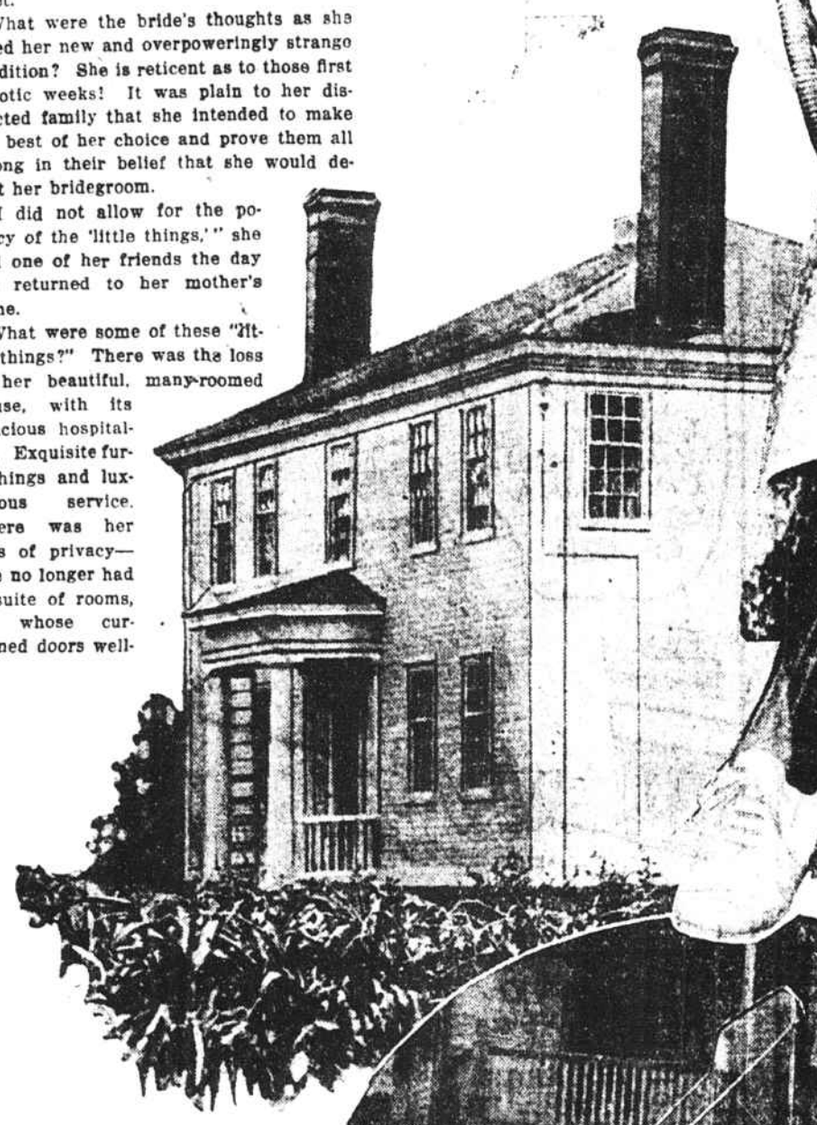
As all this world knows, neither father, Uncle Stuyvesant or Aunt Elsie came to the young couple's rescue with any sort of an allowance, large or small. The bride and bridegroom, having been married in a country town in Connecticut, returned to Newport to face the music. And very discordant it was! The bride's family cut her off, and, frankly, the Geraghtys were none too happy to have the exotic young woman thrust upon them.

For a few months she was forced to live in the family cottage with two sisters-in-law near her own age and half a dozen small fry of both sexes. Father Geraghty continued to drive his cab and Mother Geraghty slaved all day to make both ends meet.

What were the bride's thoughts as she faced her new and overpoweringly strange condition? She is reticent as to those first chaotic weeks! It was plain to her distracted family that she intended to make the best of her choice and prove them all wrong in their belief that she would desert her bridegroom.

"I did not allow for the potency of the 'little things,'" she told one of her friends the day she returned to her mother's home.

What were some of these "little things?" There was the loss of her beautiful, many-roomed house, with its gracious hospitality. Exquisite furnishings and luxurious service. There was her loss of privacy—she no longer had a suite of rooms, at whose curtained doors well-trained servants tapped for entrance.



The Farmhouse Where Mrs. Geraghty, Niece of the First Mrs. Alfred G. Vanderbilt Dug and Hoed and Sold Garden Truck to Her Former Companions in Newport.

Instead of having her breakfast served in the sunlit breakfast room, on the nest china, with splendid family silver, and by a butler grown gray in her family's service, she had to get up at 6 o'clock, even in the Winter, and cook breakfast for herself and her husband.

She had to sweep, dust and keep tidy the cottage to which they moved after three months in the Geraghty home.

And inevitably, as she watched old girl friends pass by in their new, pretty dresses, her own last-year clothes growing shabby, she found herself making comparisons between her lot and theirs.

Loneliness grew. She made friends of her two sisters-in-law, and by precept and example tried to turn them into "society girls." Here the sturdy good sense of her mother-in-law called a halt! She did not want her girls made into foolish butterflies, and as for letting them "make up" as the young ladies on Bellevue avenue and the Cliffs did, perish the thought! No; her girls should live as they were brought up to live. Which ended young Mrs. Geraghty's missionary efforts in this direction.

She fared no better with her husband, and she now admits that before the end of her first year of marriage she knew that the "pull" of her childhood would be too strong to make her over, just as the pull of her husband's first nineteen years was too strong for her efforts to overcome.

Perhaps a change of environment might help matters. Feeling this, she urged Jack to take a farm out west or somewhere away from all early associations. The result was the small truck farm near Woburn, Mass., where her baby was born and where she added planting and weeding to her household work. It is conceded that Mrs. French Vanderbilt financed this undertaking and also supplied the layette and all nursing and doctor's expenses for the event.

After the baby was born Mrs. Geraghty kept one servant when she could get one, and, thanks to some relenting on her parents' part, was surrounded with a little more material comfort. But this did not bring happiness. She was now barely eighteen years of age; under normal conditions she would be "coming out." She read daily of her former friends and their dances, dinners and balls. More and more she contrasted her condition with theirs, and every minute of the day she missed the luxuries and pleasures that were hers by birth.

The habits of childhood, held down temporarily by the very strangeness of her new position, now reasserted themselves.

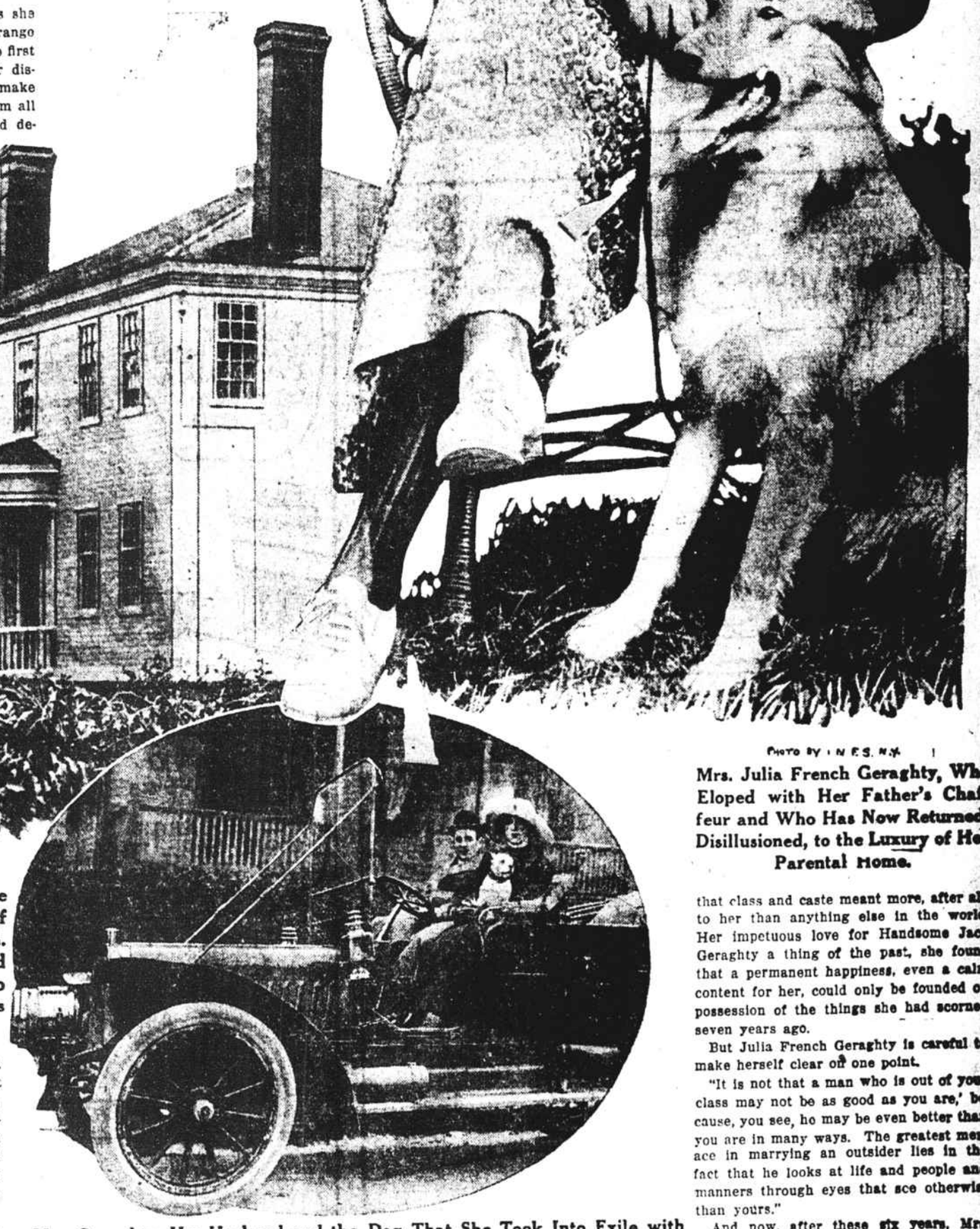
"I never could get used to drawing my own bath, and whenever I wanted anything I unconsciously found myself hunting for the bell so as to summon a servant," Mrs. Geraghty has said more than once.

These were the things that rankled as the young wife and mother spent many days in her little home. Her former perfectly cooked meals, served in a dignified manner by a corps of quiet voiced servants, had given way to food hastily cooked by herself and served by a crude, untrained maid of all work or by herself. And every hour of every day she found that her husband and she spoke a vastly different language.

Then the baby broadened her vision, and the habits of early days pulled harder than ever. She and her brothers and sister had been born in the most beautiful room in her grandmother's stately home. Every luxury known to wealth had surrounded her mother on these occasions. Her baby was born in a maternity hospital in Boston and taken, within three weeks, to the shabby little Woburn home.

She and her brothers and sister had trained nurses, uniformed maids, and later especially trained nursery governesses to care for them. They wore clothes fit for the proverbial princesses, and were taken to ride in sumptuous horse-drawn carriages. Her baby had no trained attendants after it left the hospital, no maids, nor any prospect of nursery governesses. She could not look ahead and see the college education that should be her child's right, nor any of the comforts or luxuries that her brother's children were then enjoying.

As her early environment asserted itself more strongly she came to the realization that class and caste meant more, after all, to her than anything else in the world. Her impetuous love for Handsome Jack Geraghty a thing of the past, she found that a permanent happiness, even a calm content for her, could only be founded on possession of the things she had scorned seven years ago.



Mrs. Geraghty, Her Husband and the Dog That She Took Into Exile with Her When She Eloped.

PHOTO BY I N E S, N.Y.

Mrs. Julia French Geraghty, Who Eloped with Her Father's Chaffeur and Who Has Now Returned, Disillusioned, to the Luxury of Her Parental Home.

But Julia French Geraghty is careful to make herself clear on one point.

"It is not that a man who is out of your class may not be as good as you are,' because, you see, he may be even better than you are in many ways. The greatest menace in marrying an outsider lies in the fact that he looks at life and people and manners through eyes that see otherwise than yours."

And now, after these six years, Mrs. Geraghty has decided that she wants her child to have the advantages that she had; she wants her child brought up in the environment and with the habits that were given her. She wants her child to play with the Vanderbilt, Astor, Goelet and French children; to look at life later through their eyes.

And so she is now living with her mother, Mrs. Le Roy French, in Newport, in the luxury to which she was born and which her child will share.

Incidentally, Mrs. Geraghty returns to a very much changed family. Since her elopement her mother has divorced her father, and the latter is now married again. Ormond French, the eldest son of the family, has married and has three children. More recently Edward Tuck French married a pretty telephone operator, and after a sensational experience died suddenly last month. And two months ago Aunt Elsie Vanderbilt became Mrs. Paul Fitzsimmons, wife of an officer in the U. S. Navy.

These changes will not radically affect Mrs. Geraghty—she does not consider them at all—for her only thought is, "At last I am home and my child will have everything that I had, and so I cannot fail to be happy. Once more my bath will be drawn for me, my meals served by trained servants, and my associates will have the same habits and standards, even the same thoughts, as myself!"